

IN FRONT of Chatham Town's largest crowd for years, Wycombe Wanderers turned on a scintillating display of attacking football to completely outclass the Kent semi-professionals on Saturday. At the end of the 90 minutes, Chatham, who were in this F.A. Cup third qualifying stage for the first time in 50 years, finished completely shattered having been given a footballing lesson they are unlikely to forget.

Without a doubt, Wycombe were a couple of classes above the home side and their brand of flowing football left the crowd, Chatham officials and the Kent pressmen completely bewildered. They hadn't seen anything like it for years.

Having watched Chatham against Sheppey last week, Wycombe felt they were about the class of a mid-table Rothmans Isthmian League side. On Saturday, they resembled something more like a Hellenic League outfit.

They were yards too slow, gave Wycombe all the space and time they needed and looked to have only two or three players capable of Isthmian soccer.

But this shouldn't detract from the size of Wycombe's victory. Last term they would have struggled against such opposition (remember Bracknell Town?) but after the first half hour, there was never any doubt of the final outcome. By half time, the match was over as a contest.

On this showing, Chatham's dreams of Southern League football are a long way away unless they can make some use of their hiding on Saturday. The score could well have reached double figures had it not been for the sterling work done by centre half Terry Jones, while number eight Alan Harrison worked tirelessly to promote attacks from midfield.

Their efforts, however, were in vain. In the first ten minutes, Wanderers had wasted

at least two good chances and unless we were going to be subjected to a repeat of the England-Poland classic, it was only a matter of time before they opened their account. In the end, the three front runners — Steve Perrin, Keith Searle and Tony Horseman — all scored two and Larry Pritchard completed the spree with a brilliant individual effort.

In only the second minute Mick Holifield blazed over the top after Searle had leapt inches above the home defence and then four minutes later Pritchard

corner. Two other flag kicks followed in quick succession and a minute later one sweeping move involving Grant, Horseman, Searle and Pritchard from one end of the pitch to the other, left Chatham stranded.

Goals just had to come. Despite the efforts of Jones and the clumsy Ervin, they just couldn't stem the tide and after good work by Holifield and Searle, Perrin shot Wanderers ahead after 18 minutes.

Holifield, wide on the flank, switched the ball inside to Searle on the edge of the area.

quently "lost" defenders with ease.

The second goal, by Larry Pritchard, was the best of the game and superbly taken. Another player who has been below his best in recent games, this goal by the Wycombe skipper showed he is right back on form again. Searle, inside his own half, spotted a massive gap in midfield and arched a pinpoint pass through to Pritchard on half way. Larry cut inside, beating two defenders on the way, worked his way just into the Chatham box and fired in a low

drive.

Harrison sent one dipping shot just wide of Maskell's dive and the post before the break but two minutes into the new half, Wycombe were right back again. Yet another corner — one of 11 won by Wycombe — was floated into the box where Perrin outjumped the defence once more but struck the crossbar with his header.

To their credit, Chatham fought back doggedly with the wind behind them in this half. They produced one or two attractive raids and yet never

upset with the decision and after Pritchard and Buxton had been involved in a skirmish, for one moment it seemed the match was about to flare up. Harrison took a vicious stab at Phil Wood's heels, but fortunately the niggling petered out. Perhaps it was as well for Wycombe. Four Chatham players had been sent off in three previous cup matches and only last week their full back resigned his marching orders against Sheppey when he broke an opponent's jaw.

Three goals in the last 15 minutes, however, brought Wycombe back to life. Two of the scores were more than fortunate for 'keeper Gunner. A superb cross-ball from Pritchard found Searle once again unmarked with enough time to control the ball, look up and select his spot. Gunner came out and managed to get his hands to the ball but could only deflect it into the air. It bounced down and rolled sally into the net.

Ribbins saved on the line from Horseman two minutes later but there was to be no let up from Wycombe, who made it six with five minutes remaining.

It looked a certain score for the overlapping Roger Grant but after beating several defenders, the full back's shot was deflected away by Gunner as far as Keith Searle. He was no more than four yards from goal and clipped the ball home for his easiest goal of the season.

Dylan Evans replaced Holifield in the 82nd minute and laid on the final goal for Horseman. Derek Gamblin's sheer determination in making three tackles and coming out with the ball, set Evans away on a 20 yard run. A quick cross to Horseman who turned and switched inside before slamming the ball over Gunner, completed the rout.

CHATHAM: J. Gunner; J. Ribbins, A. Ervin, T. Jones, J. Adams; J. Lilla, D. Pack (sub. B. O'Sullivan 78 mins.), R. Harrison; P. Laraman, R. Hales, D. Buxton.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, P. Wood, D. Bullock, R. Grant; R. Williams, M. Holifield (sub. D. Evans 82 mins.), L. Pritchard, A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin.

Referee: A. W. Ward (London).
Half time: 1-0.
Goal scorers: Wycombe — Perrin 2 (18, 43), Searle 2 (76, 85), Horseman 2 (42, 87), Pritchard (27).

Attendance: 1,102.

By STUART EARP: Chatham T. 0, Wycombe W. 7

ched down Holifield's chip but then also sent the ball too high when well placed.

In the 11th minute, however, Town produced their first threat of the match when Harrison sent Hales through. The centre forward curled in a neat drive but John Maskell dived well to his right to save.

The action was soon down at the opposite end with Perrin heading down and inches wide and then Rob Williams thundering in a shot with tremendous power only to see 'keeper John Gunner tip the ball over for a

shot under Gunner's body. A magnificent effort. Two goals in a minute just before half time emphasised their superiority. Grant's 42nd minute corner was palmed out by Gunner, but only as far as Horseman who had time to bring the ball down, control and then lash it home to make it 3-0.

Thirty seconds later "Bodger" created another goal, brilliantly taken by Perrin. It was Horseman's cross to the far post that brought the score, the unmarked Perrin thundering the ball home with a tremendous

looked like breaking through.

Chatham's frustration almost boiled over in the 70th minute when they were denied an obvious penalty. Jack Lillis split the visiting defence, sending Don Buxton racing through with only Maskell to beat. Pushing the ball beyond the 'keeper's reach, he seemed to be clear when he was pulled down by Maskell. Referee Ward, however, felt the offence justified only a free kick for obstruction, which Chatham completely wasted.

They were understandably

looked like breaking through.



Wycombe goalkeeper John Maskell advances as Alan Harrison is tackled by Phil Wood during Wycombe's emphatic 7-0 F.A. Cup win at Chatham.